

**Statement of  
Chairman Henry J. Hyde  
Before the  
Committee on International Relations  
September 14, 2005**

**Markup of H. Res. 408**

The Committee now has before it the second of today's resolutions of inquiries, H. RES. 408. Introduced by Mr. Hinchey of New York, H. Res. 408, requests the President and directs the Secretary of Defense to transmit information related to communications with officials of the United Kingdom between January 1, 2001 and March 19, 2003 regarding the United States' policy with respect to Iraq.

Like H. RES. 375, this resolution follows publication of the so-called "Downing Street Memo," a memorandum prepared for a meeting on July 23, 2002 between Tony Blair and British officials.

As explained earlier, the Downing Street Memo does not raise anything new. The decision to go to war in Iraq and the intelligence surrounding the decision have been examined and reexamined, and the conclusions set out in these studies clearly support reporting this resolution adversely. None found any evidence of Administration officials attempting to coerce, influence or pressure intelligence analysts or "fixing" intelligence.

Without repeating all the arguments made with H. RES. 375, I can think of no better words in urging you to report H. RES. 408 adversely than Senator Roberts' comments on the Silberman-Robb Commission report: "I don't think there should be any doubt that we have now heard it all regarding prewar intelligence. I think that it would be a monumental waste of time to replot this ground any further. We should now turn our full attention to the future ..."

H. RES. 408 is drafted in sweeping and overbroad language that would include years of Presidential documents of the most sensitive nature involving communications between heads of state. As pointed out as far back as George Washington, himself, complying with such a request would run contrary to constitutional principles and set a dangerous precedent.

The volume of the documents requested under H. RES. 408, covering years' worth of documents, would represent an unjustified burden on the executive office as a practical matter as well.

I urge you to vote to report this resolution adversely.